CLAIMS:

1.   A method of controlling retransmission of a content item contained in a

multimedia message, comprising

receiving the message containing the content item from a sender together with an identifier of

an intended recipient of the message,

processing the content item to detect the presence or absence of a watermark therein,

if the absence of a watermark has been detected,

—   causing a watermark to be embedded in the content item, and

—   allowing retransmission of the message including the watermarked content item to the

      intended recipient,

and otherwise controlling retransmission of the message including the content item to the

intended recipient.

2.   The method as claimed in claim 1, in which controlling retransmission

comprises allowing retransmission of the message including the watermarked content item to

the intended recipient and billing the sender a premium price.

3.   The method as claimed in claim 1, in which controlling retransmission

comprises allowing retransmission of the message including the watermarked content item to

the intended recipient and recording details regarding the retransmission.

4.   The method as claimed in claim 1, in which controlling retransmission

comprises restricting retransmission of the message.

5.   The method as claimed in claim 4, in which restricting retransmission

comprises disallowing retransmission of the message.

6.   The method as claimed in claim 4, in which restricting retransmission

comprises allowing retransmission of the message but disallowing retransmission of the

content item.

7.   The method as claimed in claim 4, 5 or 6, in which retransmission is conditional upon approval by a provider of the content item.

8.   A system arranged for controlling retransmission of a content item contained in a multimedia message, comprising

receiving means for receiving the message containing the content item from a sender together with an identifier of an intended recipient of the message,

watermark detecting means for processing the content item to detect the presence or absence of a watermark therein, and for signaling to conditional retransmitting means the presence or absence of a watermark,

the conditional retransmitting means being arranged for, conditional upon receiving a signal indicating the absence of a watermark,

–   activating watermarking means for embedding a watermark in the content item, and

–   activating retransmitting means for retransmitting the message including the watermarked content item to the intended recipient,

and for otherwise controlling retransmission of the message including the content item to the intended recipient.

9.   A media transcoding system, arranged for transcoding content items in a multimedia message to a format suitable for an intended recipient, comprising the system of claim 8.

10.   A computer program product arranged for causing a processor to execute the method of claim 1.